of the *maidan* to the east of the Public Offices in Trivandrum, and when it gets into working order, it is bound to afford considerable stimulus to the economic advancement of the country. The Government have also decided to take part in the British Empire Exhibition to be held in London in 1924 under the patronage of His Majesty the King Emperor. A committee composed of officials and non-officials, with the Director of Agriculture as the convener, has been constituted to work out the details, and it is proposed to hold a preliminary exhibition in Trivandrum at the time of His Highness the Maha Raja's next birth-day for the final selection of the exhibits to be sent to London. I appeal to you to heartily co-operate with the committee to make the State's participation in the project a complete success.

26. It may here be mentioned in passing that, with a view to encourage local products and manufactures, the Government have issued orders that, in the matter of purchasing stores required for departmental use, heads of departments should prefer Travancore products, provided they satisfy their requirements as regards quality and do not compare unfavourably with foreign products in regard to prices.

27. Geology.—The Department of Geology has been made a section of the Department of Industries with effect from the beginning of the current year. With a view to enable the staff of this section to carry on the work of prospecting for minerals of economic value more effectively, a Bill is being prepared by the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil empowering the staff to enter on private lands, if necessary. A programme of prospecting for and conducting an economic survey of minerals has been drawn up, and the Assistant Geologist has commenced to work at it and give the Chemical Assistant of the department the materials necessary for the ascertainment of mineral contents in the minerals prospected. The first volume of the Geological Records of Travancore has been published, and for the first time in the history of the State, concession to work for minerals of commercial value has been granted to sons of the soil. The allotment to the Department of Industries including Geology has been increased from Rs. 97,798 in 1096 to Rs. 1,86,500 in 1098.

28. Banking.—Orders were recently passed detailing the ideas of the Government in regard to the character and the constitution of the proposed State-aided Bank for Travancore and specifying the concessions which the Government were prepared to make in aid of it, and the proposals of the Government were referred to the Economic Development Board for its further remarks. In these proposals, Government have expressed themselves in favour of a bank worked by an indigenous agency as a purely non-official concern, they being satisfied with only one Director on the managing board with no power to vote and the State aid taking the shape of a substantial deposit. Only such conditions as are necessary for effectively watching the working of the banks are proposed to be imposed. A Joint Stock Company will have to be registered for the purpose in Travancore with a capital of Rs. 30 lakhs, divided into 60,000 shares of Rs. 50 each. Subject to a maximum of Rs. 5 lakhs, Government will deposit an amount in the Bank equal to the paid-up capital of the Company for a period of 5 years, one-half of that deposit bearing no interest at all and the other half bearing interest at the low rate of 4 per cent. The capital of the Company has, to start with, been deliberately kept low with a view to enable the people of the State to float the Bank easily, and it may well be increased later when the operations of the Bank justify such a course. The further remarks of the Economic Development Board have just been received and final orders will issue as early as possible, after a careful consideration of those remarks. It is earnestly hoped that the people of Travancore would evince the necessary practical enthusiasm for the early inauguration of this Bank.

29. There has not been much perceptible improvement in the working of indigenous banking concerns in the State. The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies has severely criticised their methods and has even suggested legislative interference with a view to protect the public from the evils of unsound banking methods. Government, however, do not propose to take any immediate action in the direction

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indicated by the Registrar, in view of the abnormal financial stringency through which the country has been passing since the close of the War. It is sincerely hoped that these banking concerns will soon improve their methods and increasingly conform to recognised banking principles in their future working. Government, in this connection, regret to note that the Quilon Bank, to which they were prepared to lend a sum of Rs. 25,000 on easy terms, as stated in my last year's Address, has failed to take advantage of that offer.

30. In the meantime, the Anchal Savings Banks, which are primarily maintained for the convenience of the poor investor, are, as the result of the increase in the rate of interest announced in paragraph 14 of my Address last year, becoming increasingly popular. The total number of Anchal offices at which savings bank work is done, has risen from 47 in 1097 to 72 in the current year. The number of accounts and the closing balance of these banks, which were 17,865 and Rs. 10·3 lakhs at the beginning of 1097, have increased to 21,396 and Rs. 12½ lakhs respectively at the end of Dhanu, 1098.

31. Co-operation.—The number of Co-operative Societies rose from 266 at the beginning of 1097 to 367 at its close. The number of Societies actually working at the end of 1097 was 296 and 360 at the end of Dhanu, 1098, while that of the Societies working for the benefit of the depressed classes has risen from 44 to 66 during the former and again to 68 during the latter period. Of the 360 Societies mentioned above, 60 are non-agricultural, and 11 among the latter are engaged in activities other than credit. The starting of a Central Weavers' Society and of Societies for land colonisation is engaging the attention of the department. The Trivandrum Central Co-operative Bank was the only financing institution for the movement till recently. With a view to make the Central Bank more popular, its bye-laws have been so amended as to admit of interest up to 7½ per cent. being allowed on deposits, and rules for the opening of a provident business depôt have been framed by the board of management. The formation of other Urban Banks is also being fostered, one such having already been registered for Nagercoil, while it is reported that Alleppey and Kottayam are likely to follow suit. The draft bye-laws of the Travancore Co-operative Union have been published in the Gazette, the objects of which are to focus non-official opinion on co-operation, to undertake non-official supervision of Societies not working under any union, and to do propaganda work for the dissemination of co-operative ideals among the masses. A Supervising Union has been started at Mavelikara, and applications for the establishment of two more such Unions at Kottayam and Perumpavur have been received by the Registrar. These Unions will render the requisite non-official help to the department in the disposal of petitions for arbitration, enquiry into complaints, examination of applications for new Societies, etc. Government have also made provision in the current year's budget for the allowances of Honorary Assistant Registrars intended to supplement the propaganda and the supervision work of the stipendiary officers, and the Registrar's report on the subject of their appointment has been just received. The strength of the inspecting staff has also been appreciably increased to cope with the additional work entailed by the rapid increase of fresh Societies, and the growing need for more effective propaganda, inspection and audit. The Rules passed under Regulation X of 1089 are being amended with a view to enable the Land Revenue Department to execute the arbitration awards of the Co-operative Department summarily, to admit of the profits in unlimited liability Societies with share capital being assigned towards dividends, and to invest the Registrar with the power to limit the maximum rates of dividends. Government trust that, with the help of non-official co-operation which he should enlist in an increasing measure, and the experience which he has gained during his training of the various phases of the movement in Madras, the Registrar would eventually make the movement a real live force, capable of exercising its beneficent influence in all important spheres of human activity in this country.

32. Forest.—The gross revenue of the Forest Department rose from Rs. 12,29,843 in 1096 to Rs. 15,39,117 in 1097. The question of the improvement and expansion of forest communications is engaging the attention of the

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